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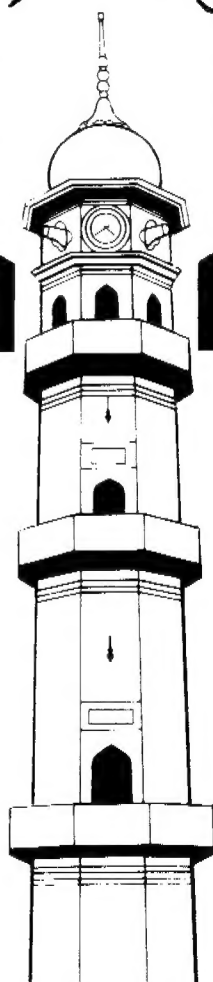
إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

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Muhammad
to Other Religions

The Miracles of Promised
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Jesus in Islam



A Publication of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam Inc. USA

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The Muslim Sunrise is the official Journal of the American Fazi Mosque. The magazine is open for discussion on Islam as well as topics relating to other religions. It highlights the role of Islam in a changing environment. It provides a platform for public opinion on current problems confronting humanity and their solution. Opinions expressed in the magazine may not necessarily be those of the American Fazi Mosque.

Address all inquiries to:

The Editor
2141 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
Ph: (202) 232-3737

EDITORIAL STAFF

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The Relation of The Holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) To Other Religions

Rev. Stephen S. Infantino Ph.D.

The Prophet's relation with Judaism and Christianity was one of tolerance and recognition of their validity because of their possession of the same message given them by the various prophets of God. It is certainly not true that Muhammad (may peace be upon him) sought to spread Islam by the sword. In Surah 2, verse 257 we have the proclamation, "There is no compulsion in religion." In fact, earlier in the same chapter, Muslims are exhorted to forgive and overlook those People of the Book who try to turn them again into disbelievers. This passage does not exhort Muslims to violence. "Many of the People of the Book wish, out of sheer envy from themselves, that after you have believed, they could turn you again into disbelievers after the truth has become manifest to them. But forgive and overlook till Allah brings His decree" (2:110).

The Quran, furthermore, explicitly speaks of friendship with the Christians. "And thou shalt assuredly find those who say, 'We are Christians' to be the nearest of them in friendship to disbelievers. That is because amongst them are savants and monks and because they are not arrogant." (5:83). This passage is certainly borne out in the very moving story of the Prophet urging his persecuted followers to emigrate to Christian Abyssinia. The Prophet said to his followers, "Go to Abyssinia, the country of Negus; he is a just King." When ambassadors from Mecca came to extradite these followers, claiming that they defamed Jesus, the Negus questioned the Muslims. One of them, Jafar, replied, "We say as to him, (i.e. Jesus), what our prophet has taught us say, viz. 'He is the servant of God and His Messenger and His Spirit and His Word which He sent to the virgin Mary.'" The Negus took a piece of wood and drew a line on the ground and said, "I am very happy to say that there is no more difference between your religion and mine than this line." (Sarwar, p. 92)

As for friendship between Jews and Muslims, at beginning of the Muslims'

sojourn in Medina there was peace between them and the Jews. According to some accounts, the Jews, at first saw Muhammad as the awaited Messiah who would help them in their fight against the Christians. When Muhammad entered Yethrib the name was changed in his honor to Madina-un-Nabi (the city of the Prophet). Arabs and Jews alike welcomed him as the promised Messenger "who was going to redeem the nation and lead it to victory". (Sarwar, pp. 137 & 150) The covenant between Muhammad and the people of Medina states: "The Jewish tribes in covenant with the other tribes of Medina will have rights similar to those of Muslims." Equal rights! "The Jews will keep their own faith, and Muslims to their own." Freedom of religion! (Ahmad p. 42) For a time Muhammad even adopted Jerusalem as the qibla and respected the Jewish fast of Ashura, the Jewish day of Atonement. These practices were changed because of later hostility and revelations.

The friendship towards both Christians and Jews is also seen in the passage in the 22nd surah which justifies war in defense of places of worship not only of Muslims, but of Jews and Christians, also. "And if Allah had not repelled some people by means of others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft remembered, would surely have been destroyed." (Q 22:41) In fact after the Persians defeated the Christian emperor, Heraclius, the Prophet predicted that the Christians would be victorious over the Persians and that the Muslims would rejoice over the victory. "The Romans have been defeated in the land nearby, and they after their defeat, will be victorious. In a few years—Allah's is the dominion before and after that— and on the day the believers will rejoice." (Q 30:3-5) This revelation came in 616. Six years later Heraclius began his counterattack and by 627 he had defeated the Persians at Nineveh.

The 52nd verse of the Surah Al-Ma'idah can appear to contradict the friendship mentioned above when it says, "O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends each other. And whoso among you takes them for friends is indeed one of them. Verily, Allah guides not the unjust people." (Q 5:52) The commentary on the Holy Quran published by the Ahmadiyya Movement corrects this apparent contradiction. "The verse should not be construed to prohibit or discourage just or benevolent treatment of Jews, Christians and other disbelievers (60:9). It refers only to those Jews or Christians who are at war with Muslims and who are always hatching plots against them."

This friendship and tolerance towards Christianity and Judaism was based on the Prophet's acceptance of the common ground which the three

religions shared. Haykal has Muhammad speak the following words at what he calls "the Congress on the Three Religions" where the Christians of Najran entered into a religious discussion with the Jews and Muslims of Medina. "We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob and his children, and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to all other Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them; and to Him we submit ourselves. (Q 3:68)

The fact that there is a common belief in and worship of the One God did not, however, prevent Muhammad from preaching to the People of Book in order to correct what he believed to be their errors. Such preaching, however, was not done in a hostile argumentative way, and it was begun with a recognition of the common ground which united these people. "And argue not with the People of the Book except with what is best as an argument, but argue not at all with such of them as are unjust. And say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and that which has been revealed to you; and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.' (Q 29:47) The best argument begins with what people share in common. When it comes to those who are unjust, however, there is no sense arguing with them at all. This idea is reminiscent of the saying of Jesus (May peace be upon him). "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you." (Mt. 7:6)

Where there was no common ground there could not even be discussion of differences. The Surah, Al-Kafirun, states this, "Say 'O ye disbelievers! I worship not as you worship. Nor do you worship as I worship. Nor do I worship those that you worship, nor do you worship Him whom I worship. For you your religion, and for me my religion.' (Q 109:2-7) That is it! End of discussion! Each goes his separate way in peace.

Resting secure on common belief in and worship of the one God, the Prophet would in the interest of truth and righteousness criticize what he saw as distortions of the Torah and the Gospel, and the misbehavior of Christians and Jews. In the Surah Al-Baqrah, verse 75, the Jews are criticized for their hardness of heart. But the Holy Prophet did not over-generalize. He was able to recognize those individual Jews whose hearts were not hardened. "And indeed of them there are some that humble themselves for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what you do." (Q 2:75)

Verse 79 of the same Surah criticizes some illiterate Jews who, unable

to read the Bible, put their own false notions and conjectures into the beliefs of Judaism. Verse 80 warns those Jews who for a small sum of money compose books of the Bible and then claim they have been revealed by Allah.

In verses 71 and 72 of the following Surah, Al-Imran, the people of the Book are confronted with not recognizing in the Bible the signs foretelling the prophethood of Muhammad. This same Surah also goes on to recognize that there are honest Christians and Jews as well as dishonest ones. "Among the People of the Book there is he who, if thou trust him with dinar, will not return it to thee, unless thou keep standing over him." (Q 3:72) This verse shows again that the Prophet did not level a blanket criticism at all members of a particular group. He was able to distinguish between the good and the bad. This discriminating character is badly needed today when people have tendency, either out of prejudice, laziness or just plain ignorance, to smear all the members of a group with the same paint! To fail to practice the discriminations of the Prophet Muhammad contributes to greater misunderstanding and fragmentation of the human community.

The Prophet, furthermore opposed the belief of Christians that Allah, God, is the Messiah and the son of Mary. "They indeed have disbelieved who say, 'surely Allah— He is the Messiah, son of Mary.'" (Q 5:18; 4:172)

He also criticized the belief that Allah, God, is the "third of three" as if to say there are three gods. (Q 5:74) This verse is clarified by verse 17 of the same Surah. "And when Allah will say, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say to men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?' he will answer, 'Holy art Thou, I could never say that to which I had no right.'" (Q 5:117) It seems that some Christians during the time of the Holy Prophet had divinized Mary along with Jesus and created a trinity of three gods.

The belief of Jesus as Son of God in a physical sense was also challenged by the Holy Prophet. "The Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He has a son when He has no consort, and when He has created everything and has knowledge of all things?" (Q 6:102)

Now it is not the purpose of this paper to engage in theological dialogue, but as one who is sincerely interested in such dialogue between Christians and Muslims, I would like to say that nowadays there are few if any Christians who would consider Mary a god or even treat her as such. Nor is the title, Son of God, intended today in a physical sense,

hence requiring a spouse, as it did among the pagans of Muhammad's time. As for the current Christian concept of the Trinity, I would encourage the reading of Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr's response to the Christian theologian, Hans Kung in the April, 1987 edition of a Journal called, "The Muslim World".

In his response, Professor Nasr says that the Trinity is not the major theological problem. The names of the Trinity can be understood as similar to the beautiful names of God. Dr. Nasr points out that there are numerous poems in Persian and Arabic which have Christian Trinity correspond to three different divine aspects. Furthermore, he says, many Sufis understood the Trinity as three hypostases which do not destroy the unity of God. Dr. Kung, for his part, states that the writings of Paul in New Testament allow Christians to recognize prophets who have come after Jesus. In First Corinthians 12:28-29 and Ephesians 4:11 Paul states that the gift of prophecy is given to people who come after Christ. True, Paul is speaking within the context of the Christians community, but Dr. Kung's statement raises this question for Christians. Is there any reason to restrict God's gift of prophecy to Christians, especially since God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"? (1 Timothy 2:4) After all, Christians must admit that it was Muhammad, and not Christians missionaries, who brought the knowledge and acceptance of Jesus Christ as a prophet to the Arab world. The Rev. Dr. Kung also goes so far as to say that Islam can serve as a corrective for the formulation of some Christian doctrines.

It is my sincere belief that as the scholars and devout members of both faiths continue to engage in dialogue, that beliefs will be clarified, refined, and expressed in such a way that misunderstanding and criticism of each other's beliefs will diminish. Then the desire of Allah and of his Holy Prophet will come closer to being realized. "O People of the Book! come to a word equal between us and you—that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for Lords beside Allah." (Q 3:68)

Throughout his criticism of the behavior and beliefs of some of the Christians and Jews of his time, and in spite of the fact that many Jews and Christians did not convert to Islam, the Prophet never succumbed to the temptation of condemning members of other religions to hell. "Surely, those who believe and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians—whichever party from among these truly believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, shall have their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve." (Q 2:63)

Ibn Ishak tells the story of the four Hanifs who forsook the idols of the Quraish in order to seek the true faith of Abraham. This story illustrates that Prophet's respect for those who seek true monotheism regardless of whether they be Christians, Muslim, or a member of no organized religion as in the case of Zeid bin Amr. Waraka bin-Naufal became a Christian, and acquired much knowledge from the Christians, and out of their books. (This is the cousin of Muhammad's wife, Khadija, who confirmed the Prophet's first revelation as being like the revelation given to Moses.) Ubaidallah bin Jahsh remained in doubt and uncertainty, and accepted Islam, and emigrated to Abyssinia. There he went over to Christianity, and proudly explained to his earlier co-religionists: "We see clearly, but you are still blinking like newly born puppies." Uthman bin al-Huwairith, betook himself to the ruler of Byzantium, and there became a Christian occupying an honorable position at Court. Zeid bin Amr became neither Jew nor Christian. He kept himself from idolatry and from eating flesh which had been sacrificed to idols, and upbraided his people for their false idol-worship. As he prayed at the Ka'ba he said: 'My God, if I knew what form of worship is most pleasing to Thee I would choose it, but I know it not.' The Prophet said of him: 'On the last day Zeid will rise up, a community in himself.'

Indeed, the Holy Prophet was way ahead of his times in opposing religious exclusivity. "And they say, 'None shall ever enter Heaven unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their vain desires....Nay, whoever submits competely to Allah and he is the doer of good, shall have his reward from his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, neither shall they grieve. And the Jews say, 'The Christians stand on nothing' and the Christians say, 'The Jews stand on nothing;' while they both read the same Book...But Allah shall judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they disagree." (Q 2:112-114) "Allah shall judge between them..." The members of different religions may disagree, but only God can judge whose understanding is closest to the truth, who willingly distorts the truth, and who is in error through no fault of his own. Today, I believe most Jews have developed the attitude which the Prophet so long ago advocated. I am sorry to say, however, that there are Christian fundamentalists who have not even heeded the words of their own Jesus who said, "Judge not that you shalt not be judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." (Mt. 7:1)

The Holy Prophet strove vigorously to bring the truth revealed to him to all with whom he came into contact, but he also realized that religious diversity is natural because of Allah's respect for the free will of the human

being. In the Surah Al-An'am it is written. "And if Allah had enforced His will, they would not have set up gods with Him...And abuse not those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they, out of spite, abuse Allah in their ignorance. Thus unto every people have We caused their doings to seem fair." (Q 6:108-109) Again, as the Ahmadiyya commentary explains so well, God does not cause the mistakes or evil actions of humans to look fair. This passage only signifies that God has so created human nature (and in this law of God lies the secret of man's all-around progress) that when a person persists in doing a certain action he acquires a liking for it, and his action begins to appear good in his sight. In accordance with this general Divine law, the idolaters come to like their worship of idols, which appears to them to be good and meritorious. It was this insight, I believe, that was the basis of the Holy Prophet's tolerance.

One last question remains to be dealt with, and I will deal with briefly because I have spoken long enough. If Muhammad was so tolerant of Christianity and Judaism, then why did he wage war against the Jews in the early part of his career and against Christians towards the latter part? There can be a long answer which deals with each particular episode. But I will spare you that answer. Hazrat Mirza Bashir ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad's *Life of Muhammad* is good reading for those who want a more detailed answer. The shorter answer is that the Prophet was very discriminating person. He was able to discriminate between the religion and the people who were members of that religion. He was also able to discriminate between those people who were his friends, or least neutral, and those people who were out to destroy him and Islam—be it for religious or political reasons. When he fought Jews or Christians it was because he perceived that they were planning to physically attack him, not because they were Jews or Christians and believed differently. Christians and Jews who were allied with Muhammad or who did not oppose him were not only treated with respect and allowed to worship in their own faiths, but they were also guaranteed protection by the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessing be upon him).

The Miracles of the Promised Messiah

Dr. M. M. Abbas

Concept of Miracles in Islam

The unusual or the extraordinary events of every day life that baffle the imagination are commonly referred to as miracles. In religious terms, however, miracles generally have a deeper significance and refer only to those unusual events that manifest a divine intervention and are not merely a matter of chance. There is a simple and clear distinction between events of every day life and divine manifestations. The latter are associated with claims as divine prophecies, while the former are merely isolated and rare events of chance. It is the claim, the prophecy, and the repetition of the manifestations that set the divine miracles apart from the otherwise rare events of life.

The concept of miracles has been given a rational and a philosophical basis. The Islamic term for a miracle is the Arabic word *mu'jiza* (pl. *mu'jizat*) derived from the root word *'ajz*, meaning to be weakened, to be incapacitated, or to be humbled. A miracle or a *mu'jiza* in Islam thus implies an event or an act performed by a claimant of Divine help that his opponents are unable to manifest or carry out.

The term *mu'jiza*, however, has not been used in the Holy Quran in referring to the miracles of the prophets. Instead two more objective terms, namely *a'ayah* (a Sign) and *burhan* (a proof) have been used. In referring to the nine miracles of Moses, for examples, we have: "And put thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without any disease. This is among the nine Signs for Pharaoh and his people for they are rebellious people" (27:17). Similarly the term *burhan* has been used for the miracles of Moses (28:33). For the Holy Prophet, his whole personality has been called a *burhan* (a proof), and we have "O ye people, a manifest proof has indeed come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light" (4:175).

Unfortunately, the concept of *mu'jizat* in Islam has gone through a period of distortions along with great misunderstandings in many other principles of Islam, in deviation of the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet. It is generally believed, for example, that since God has

the power over every thing, the miracles are not confined by the laws of nature, or by our understanding of the of the events around us as derived from our observations and experiments. This concept would accept some claimed events as miracles (*mu'jizat*) even though they may be totally against our well accepted experiences of the laws of nature. With this concept, some most unbelievable stories are attributed to the prophets and Muslim saints (*aulias*) as miracles. Clearly, some claimed miracles are based on misunderstandings while there are many others that are simply stories fabricated by the over zealous followers.

The Promised Messiah on Mu'jizat

Fortunately, the misunderstandings about the nature of miracles (*mu'jizat*) and the basis of distortions have now been removed with the advent of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. Hazrat Ahmad wrote extensively to remove great misunderstandings about *mu'jizat*. He presented forceful arguments to establish the continuing need of miracles for a convincing belief in the existence of God. The manifestation of *mu'jizat* is not only necessary for a prophet, whose whole life is full of them, but also for the righteous and the true followers of the prophet in accordance with their rank. In fact, *mu'jizat* according to the Promised Messiah are crucial signs of a living religion. He writes:

“ A *mu'jiza* is an unusual matter or an event (*amr khariq adat*) that the opponent is unable to offer the like of, even though apparently that matter or event may will be within the range of human powers” (*Roohani Khazayyen*, Vol. 21, 59).

“It should be remembered that a *mu'jiza* is given to the followers of a truthful religion only to demonstrate the difference between truth and falsehood. The real objective of a *mu'jiza* and the extent to which it is revealed is only limited to make a distinction between a truthful and a liar for those who have the ability to understand. The nature and the extent of the *mu'jiza* is also limited to the needs and the conditions of the times. If a prejudiced and an ignorant person demands a certain *mu'jiza* that is against the Divine nature and exceeds the limited need of the occasion, it is certainly not necessary that it should be shown. It would be against Divine wisdom and would be harmful for the faith of the person as well. — Only the sensible, the just and the truthful benefit from *mu'jizat*. Because of their foresight and the discriminating power of their eyes, and their love for justice and righteousness, they are able to see that these matters are not from the ordinary things of this world and that a liar cannot be capable of showing them. — With their refined intellect and

with the light of a discriminating eye, they are able to see that these matters have a divine light and a fragrance of the Hand of God, that could not be mistaken for deception or a fraud (*Roohani Khuzayyen* 21, 44-55).

It should be noted that the concept of *mu'jizat* described by the Promised Messiah is based on the Holy Quran and is supported by the writings of the early Muslim saints (*aulias*). In his book *Al-Iqtesad Fil Aeteqad*, for example, the great Muslim scholar and saint Hazrat Imam Ghazali defined a *mu'jiza* with the example: "If a prophet says that 'a sign of my truthfulness today is that I will wave finger today, and there is no human who will have the power to stop me'. And if on that day indeed no one is able to stop him, then his truthfulness is established."

The Promised Messiah's Claims

Hazrat Ahmad claimed to be the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdi* who's appearance had been foretold implicitly in the Holy Quran and explicitly in great detail in the traditions of the Holy Prophet (*ahadees*), and who had been anticipated by followers of all other major religions. In his book *Arba'een* he claimed: "I have been informed through the pure and holy revelation of God that, I am from Him as the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdi*, and the Promised Arbiter to settle the internal and external conflicts. My two names, the Messiah and the *Mahdi*, have bestowed upon me by the Holy Prophet; and through His direct revelation God gave the same names to me. And then the conditions of the present times also required that I should be given these names. There are thus three testimonies for the two names that have been given to me. I affirm with my God as the witness, Who is the Master of Heaven and the Earth, that I am from Him, and that He bears testimony to my truthfulness with His Signs." Continuing in the same reference, the Promised Messiah then made the following four challenges:

(1) "If anyone could compete with me in showing the heavenly Signs, then I am a liar."

(2) "If anyone could equal me in acceptance of prayers, then I am a liar."

(3) "If anyone could parallel me in revealing the knowledge, the truth and the wisdom of the Holy Quran, then I am a liar."

(4) "If anyone could equal me in the revealing the secret and the hidden knowledge which are given to me before hand through the Divine

power of God, then I am not from God." (*Roohani Khazayyen*, Vol.,17, 345)

These most remarkable challenges for Divine intervention and Help in four different areas form the basis of a large number of *mu'jizat* of the Promised Messiah. A claim of divine manifestations of this type is a distinguishing characteristic of the prophets, and is unprecedented in the history of Islam after the Holy Prophet. In his book *Haqeeqatul Wahi* the Promised Messiah states that God has granted him more than three hundred thousand Signs in support of his truthfulness (*Roohani Khazayyen*, Vol., 25, xx).

During early days of his claim, the Promised Messiah was asked to define the purpose of his advent. He replied: "I have been sent to establish certainty of faith in God." This indeed is the underlying purpose of the lives of all prophets, and it is with this purpose in mind that we reflect on a few *mu'jizat* of the Promised Messiah.

Some Selected Miracles of the Promised Messiah

The Promised Messiah writes that God has sent him so that the great revolutionary advances in secular knowledge taking place during his times, be paralleled by spiritual knowledge of a similar significance. This is a remarkable statement in view of the fact that the most crucial scientific discoveries which form the foundations of subsequent scientific and technological revolution and the present day high-technology were made during a period which almost coincides with the lifetime of the Promised Messiah. The most significant miracles of the Promised Messiah are thus his *mu'jizat* of knowledge in accordance with the needs of the time.

Miracles of Knowledge

1. Knowledge of the Holy Quran

The most significant *mu'jiza* of the Promised Messiah is his knowledge of the Holy Quran manifested through his writings, his lectures and informal speeches. His knowledge brought about a revolutionary change in Islam fulfilling the Quranic prophecy that the dominance of Islam over other religions will be established by the Promised Messiah. His writings include the topics of: the proofs of existence, the concept and the attributes of God; the nature of angels; the nature of revelation; the prophets of God and their basic purpose; the concept of heaven and hell, etc. With a source of knowledge derived from his divine revelations, *mu'jizat* and

spiritual experiences, his writings on these fundamental concepts acquire a unique status. The difference between his writings and of those with no recourse to divine source of knowledge is like the difference between one who observes in a broad day light and one who speculates in total darkness.

A remarkable achievement of his work is in that it provides a rational and a philosophical basis of the teachings of the Holy Quran and Islam within the framework of the Holy Quran itself, and yet at the same time is entirely consistent with all the scientific discoveries and the well established laws of nature. This is indeed a feat that is widely held to be impossible with the belief that the ideas of science and of religion based on scriptures originating thousands of years ago cannot be reconciled. Yet, it is also well recognized that there cannot be a real conflict as such, between the science of laws governing God's creation and the religion based on God's revelation to His prophets. With the Promised Messiah's writings, any notion of incompatibility between the two disappears.

It is *mu'jiza* of the Promised Messiah that the literature he produced in support of the Holy Quran bridges the gap of 1400 years between the time of revelation to the present. In the light of the writings of the Promised Messiah, the discoveries and the accumulated knowledge of the centuries only validates the revelation and the divine origin of the Holy Quran. It is because of this *mu'jiza* of knowledge of the Promised Messiah that the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect presents Islam as the only religion in the world today which is based on its revealed scriptures (the Holy Quran) and yet it is in total harmony with the continuing modern discoveries of science. The Promised Messiah invited time and time again the Muslim *Ulema* of the Indian subcontinent and of the Arab world to compete with him in writing and revealing the hidden truths and the beauties of the Holy Quran, even by pooling together all their resources. This challenge has never been accepted in an appropriate manner, with the exception of some angry responses leading their authors to disgrace and demise. Some notable examples of these will be discussed later in this article.

2. Knowledge of the Arabic Language

The Muslims of the Indian sub-continent have always learned the Arabic language as the classical language of Islam for studies of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet, and the Arabic literature on Islam. It has never been a commonly spoken language, and has been employed as medium for writing only by a handful of writers during the entire history of Islam in India. Nevertheless, following his claim of the

Promised Messiah, Hazrat Ahmad wrote extensively in the Arabic language spanning over 20 books and monographs and claimed his knowledge and command (*fasahat* and *blaghat*) of this language as a sign of truthfulness.

Before elaborating this miracle, a pertinent question that should be answered first is: Can a superiority of knowledge of expression in any language be claimed as miracle? Are there not many people with no spiritual claims who have great linguistic capabilities and acquire great abilities for expression in foreign languages? A little reflection on the background and on the nature and the purpose of the miracles of the prophets as discussed earlier would clarify the significance of this claim.

Arabic being the language of the Holy Quran, it is clear that a superiority in the understanding and expression in this language is necessary for the *mu'jiza* of revelation of knowledge of Holy Quran discussed in (1). The scholars of Arabic language believe that it is most structured of all languages, with highly systematic grammar and a vocabulary based on a unique rational system. The Promised Messiah made the revelation in his book *Minanur Rehman* that the Arabic language is a revealed language and is the parent language of all major families of languages of today. The well known Muslim divine Hazrat Imam Shafi of Arabia, a great scholar of the Arabic language himself, wrote that a complete mastery of this language is achieved only by the prophets of God. A command of this language provides a flexibility and a depth of expression that does not exist in other languages. A comprehensive and a lasting superiority of the Holy Quran over other revealed scriptures requires the superiority of the language in which it is revealed.

The Promised Messiah was born and lived almost his entire life in a remote village of Qadian, India, with the nearest town served by a train being 11 miles away. This was a totally non-literary and a non-Arabic speaking environment. He received his early education mostly in languages (Urdu, Persian, and Arabic), from three successive tutors retained by his father. He did not attend any college or any institution of religious and Arabic studies, or travel to distant places in pursuit of studies, in particular to Arabic speaking countries as was common for reputable religious scholars of those days. After his basic education with personal tutors at home, he studied Islamic literature entirely on his own without any influence of any notable scholar whatsoever. He started writing in the Urdu language and published a series of books and monographs under various titles, all devoted to a forceful presentation of the philosophy of the teachings of Islam. As mentioned earlier, his writings were based on

his remarkably enlightening commentaries of the Holy Quran inspired by his extensive revelations and spiritual experiences. In the highly hostile environment against Islam that existed during that period, his status as one of the foremost proponents of Islam was quickly established.

The situation, however, changed rather abruptly with his claim of the Promised Messiah in 1889, and his support from the Muslims in general and from the Muslim Ulema in particular vanished almost overnight. The Ulema ridiculed his claim and harshly criticized his interpretations of the Holy Quran as a display of his lack of knowledge. The focus of the criticism lied on the fact that the Promised Messiah was of a non-Arab origin and had never received any formal training in the Arabic language or in religious studies. This last charge, true as it was, required an unusual response and a divine manifestation to establish the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah. Any ordinary argument would not be sufficient in the circumstances that prevailed.

The Promised Messiah turned to most fervent prayers for divine help. His prayers were answered and a most extraordinary knowledge and a command of the Arabic language was given to him. He revealed this extraordinary spiritual experience in his book *Anjam Atham*, that after fervent prayers one night it was revealed to him that 40 thousand root words of the Arabic language were taught to him. He was commanded to write in the Arabic language, and during the remaining years of his life he wrote some 20 books and monographs in that language with a confidence and a style that constitutes a miracle. In his book *Zaruratul Imam* he declared: "As a reflection of the miracle of Quran, I have been given a Sign of the mastery of the Arabic language. There is no one who could compete with me" (*Roohani Khazayyen*, V xx, 25).

His monograph *Ijazul Massih* (The Miracle of Messiah) was based on commentaries of selected verses of the Quran and copies of the monograph were sent to the well known Ulema of India and of the Arab world. He invited all to write a similar work in response to his book within a period 60 days and declared a financial reward for the writer. From the Indian Ulema there was one who made an attempt but died before he could complete his rough notes. In the Arab world, two journals from Egypt wrote highly complementary reviews with one making the comment that the mastery of the languages displayed by the author had a miraculous level. The editor Rashid Raza of third journal *Al-minar*, however, wrote a critical review with a vague reference to unspecified mistakes and concluded "there are many among the learned who could write similar to it." On reading this the Promised Messiah wrote another

monograph *Alhuda* addressed to Rashid Raza, and challenged him to write a response. Mr. Rashid Raza was never able to write a response to it although he lived a long life after the challenge. He chose this course despite the fact the Promised Messiah had published his prophecy along with *Alhuda* that Mr. Rashid Raza will never be able to write a response, and if he did, the Promised Messiah would burn his book.

3. Publication of *Braheene' Ahmadiyya*

The Promised Messiah published his first book in the Urdu language under the title of *Braheene' Ahmadiyya* in 1884. This monumental work in four parts was devoted to a presentation of the rational and philosophical basis of the teachings of the Holy Quran and the principles of Islam in comparison with all other religions. This publication was accompanied with the challenge and pledge for the reward of his entire financial assets of substantial value should anyone refute even a one-fifth of the logical basis presented in this book.

No work in response to that challenge made more than hundred years ago has ever been published. The reviews from the Muslim *Ulema* were highly complimentary, with a well known and respected leader writing, "In view of the conditions of the time, in our opinion, no book of this kind has ever been written in the history of Islam."

A second unique feature of this work, the significance of which was not realized at the time of publication, was that it contained a compilation of the revelations of the Promised Messiah. The revelations contained in them many remarkable prophecies about his life, his spiritual rank, and the future of his yet unspecified mission. At the time of publication of the book, the significance of many explicit and some hidden prophecies contained in the revelations had not realized. This was made clear, however, almost a quarter century later when the Promised Messiah wrote a sequel to his earlier work (*Braheene' Ahmadiyya* 5) reviewing the prophecies made at the beginning of his mission that he had lived long enough to see fulfilled... This remarkable prophetic aspect of his book, coupled with the challenge of a response in refutation of the logical basis of Islam presented by him, constitutes a Divine manifestation, a *mu'jiza* of knowledge, and a Sign of his truthfulness.

4. Presentation in the Conference on World Religions

The fourth miracle of knowledge of the Promised Messiah discussed here is his paper on The Teachings of Islam (*Islami Asool ki Philosophy*)

presented in a conference on the world religions held in December 1896 in Lahore. The conference was organized by a privately formed committee who asked the representatives of the participating religions to present their response to five basic questions in the light of the scriptures of their religions. The questions were: (i) The physical, moral, and spiritual conditions of man, (ii) The state of man after life on this earth, (iii) The object of man's life and the means of its attainment, (iv) The effect of human actions on life here and the hereafter, (v) The source of Divine knowledge.

The Promised Messiah was not feeling well at the time he accepted the request for participation. He dictated his response mostly lying in bed and completed his masterpiece in a few days. His article was strictly confined to the teachings of the Holy Quran, referring frequently to its verses, and in effect constituted a brief commentary of the Holy Quran related to the subject matter of the questions. He was foretold through Divine revelation that his paper will be recognized as the best of all presented in the conference. Through a widely circulated poster, he made the announcement of "Great news for seekers of truth", and wrote: "This paper is no ordinary human effort, but a sign among the signs of God, written with His special Grace and Help. It sets forth the beauties and the truths of the Holy Quran and proves like the noon-day sun that the Holy Quran is in truth God's own word, a book revealed by the Lord of all Creations. Anyone who listens to this paper from the beginning to the end, will receive, I am sure, a new faith and a new light; and will get hold of a comprehensive commentary of the Holy Book. The paper is free from human excesses, empty boasts and vain assertions. I feel moved on this occasion by sympathy for fellow human beings to issue this notice, and invite all to come and witness the beauty of the Holy Quran, and see how cruel our critics are; they love darkness and loath light. The God of knowledge has revealed to me that this is the paper that will dominate all. Its light of truth, wisdom and knowledge will put in the shade all other parties, provided they stay to listen from beginning to end. It will not be possible for them to show anything similar from out of their holy books, be they Christians, Sanatani or Arya Hindus, or others. This will be so because God Almighty has decreed that on this day His Holy Book should reveal its splendor. I saw in a vision an invisible hand strike my palace at which a glaring light spread out in all directions on the touch of that hand. Some of that light fell on my hands. Then someone who stood near me claimed loudly: "*Allahu Akbar, Kharabut Khaibar*" (God is great, Khaibar is in ruins). The meaning of this vision is: The palace in symbolic of my heart which is the focus of the flood of heavenly light; the heavenly light is symbolic of truths of the Holy Quran; *Khaibar* is symbolic of religions corrupted by

false and un-Godly ideas, religions which seek to install man in place of God, to detract in different ways from the full meaning of His most perfect attributes. It has been revealed to me that when the contents of this paper of mine become widely known, the falsehood of false religions will become exposed and the truth of the Quran will spread till it has fulfilled its destiny. I passed from the state of vision to state of revelation. I then receive the revelation - 'Verily God is with you. Verily God stands where you stand'. This is assurance of Divine help in metaphorical language" (Teachings of Islam).

The conference received a great deal of publicity and the Promised Messiah's paper was read on December 28-29, 1899, to an audience of about ten thousand people in about 6 hours extending over two days. The additional time and day was scheduled on an overwhelming request to complete the presentation of the paper. Judging from the published reviews of Muslim and non-Muslim alike, the Promised Messiah's paper was recognized as far the best paper of the conference. This paper, published in the form of a book and translated in many languages, has received a wide publication, and constitutes a great Sign of the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

This article is dedicated to my late father Mian Ata Ullah, of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and is based on his lecture in the Annual Ahmadiyya Conference, at Rabwah, in December, 1958. _

Jesus in Islam

Tahir Ijaz

Islam is a religion which requires belief in not only the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) but all the prophets, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus. The Sacred Book of Muslims, the Quran, repeatedly mentions that Prophets and Messengers of Allah (God) have appeared among all the nations of the world throughout mankind's history. Their purpose was to create a new spirit in their people, enabling them to be in closer communion with their Maker.

The Holy Quran relates the story of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews in detail, including his birth, his mission as a Prophet to the Israelites, and crucifixion. Non-Muslims are usually surprised at the amount of information contained about Jesus in Quran. Indeed, a whole chapter in the Quran is named after Jesus's mother (Maryam).

Birth of Jesus

The Quran affirms the fatherless birth of Jesus and rejects outright the Jewish claim that his birth was illegitimate. Instead, Mary is described as a pious and righteous woman who symbolizes righteous believers blessed with Divine inspiration. According to the Quran, angels told Mary that "Allah has chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above all women of the time (Al-Quran 3:43)." The angels also told her, "O Mary, Allah gives thee glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name shall be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honored in this world and in the next, and of those who are granted nearness to God (Al-Quran 3:46)." Being unmarried, she prayed to God, "My Lord, how shall I have a son when no man has touched me?" God replied, "Such is the way of Allah. He creates what He pleases. When He decrees a thing, He says to it, 'Be!' and it is (Al-Quran 3:48)."

It is important to note that while Islam recognizes the virgin birth as a miraculous event, it does not consider it unnatural; the laws of nature are never broken. It merely reflects the inability of man to fully understand the science behind various phenomenon observed in nature. Virgin birth is certainly a medical phenomenon. Many eminent gynecologists have stated that it is possible for a woman to conceive a child without the agency of a male. This is extremely rare, but cases have been recorded.

In Islam, the immaculate conception of Jesus is not interpreted to mean he was in some way a divine Being. The Quran repudiates the idea of a fatherless birth being a criterion of Divinity, and considers Jesus as only a human being like Adam: "Surely, the case of Jesus with Allah is like the case of Adam. He created him out of dust, then He said to him 'Be!', and he was (Al Quran 3:60)."

Mission of Jesus

The mission of Jesus was confined to the Children of Israel (Al Quran 3:50), and he was not a world Messenger. The Gospels also mention this fact (Matt. 10:5,6; 15:24). Prophet Jesus was commissioned by God to revive the true spirit of the Torah in the hearts of the Israelites and clear any misunderstandings about the Law. He purified and revitalized Judaism. As Jesus was a follower of Moses, he did not change or reject the Mosaic Law. The New Testament quotes Jesus as saying that he came only to fulfill the Law and not to abolish it (Matt. 5:17). The Quran also says: "And We caused Jesus son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, fulfilling that which was revealed before him in the Torah. We gave him the Gospel which contained guidance and light, fulfilling that which was revealed before it in the Torah, and a guidance and admonition for the righteous (Al Quran 5:47)." The Gospel (Arabic: Injeel) given to Jesus which the Quran refers to was the actual Divine revelations received by him. It does not refer to the four Gospels in the New Testament which were written by anonymous authors long after the crucifixion and influenced by the philosophys of Paul whose teachings about the Atonement and Resurrection were foreign to the original teachings of Jesus.

Divinity of Jesus!

Jesus is depicted in the Quran as a human being who believed in absolute unity and indivisibility of God to Whom he was subservient to. Jesus said: "I am a servant of Allah, He has given me the Book, and has appointed me a Prophet; He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and has enjoined upon me prayer and alms-giving throughout my life (Al Quran 19:31,31)."

Muslims consider the doctrine of Divinity of Jesus and Trinity as later changes to the teachings of Jesus. The New Testament itself furnishes abundant evidence to show that Jesus was only a human being whom God chose for the reformation of his people, and repeatedly contradicts the concept of a 'Divine' Jesus. Jesus always referred to himself as having been sent by God (John 17:3) and his followers too, considered him a man

approved by God (Acts 2:22, John 3:2). He was undoubtedly called the son of God, but this title has only been employed metaphorically and in fact is used for all chosen-ones of God (Matt 5:9, Exodus 4:22). The literal connotation of 'son of God' as a Divine Being and hence the subsequent development of the Trinity Dogma was the result of Hellenistic influences on Christianity as it spread in the Gentile world. The Semitic usage of 'son of God' was misunderstood and disputes about the exact status of Jesus erupted, as recorded in early Church history.

Jesus prayed to God like all other God-fearing individuals (Luke 5:16), and engaged in spiritual exercises such as fasting (Matt. 4:2). His complete submission to God is revealed in his words of prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane: "My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt (Matt. 26:39)."

Furthermore, Jesus lacked knowledge of the future (Mark 13:32), as only Divine Being possesses perfect and complete knowledge.

Jesus also taught that perfect and complete holiness belonged to the One God alone. Once he even rebuked a man who spoke of him as a 'good teacher.' Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone (Mark 10:18)."

Miracles of Jesus

The Quran mentions several miracles of Jesus, including his ability to create birds, his ability to cure the leprous and the blind, and raising the dead to life (Al Quran 3:50). The ability to create birds is a metaphor meaning ordinary people who accepted the teachings of Jesus were spiritually transformed into birds soaring high into the lofty regions of the spiritual firmament above all worldly concerns. The healing powers can also be understood in spiritual sense. He restored hearing to those spiritually deaf, healed the spiritually sick, and gave life to those spiritually dead. Jesus specifically referred to the Pharisees of his day as being blind because among other maladies they were hypocritical in nature (Matt. 23:26). Indeed, all reformers from God are spiritual physicians since the disbelievers are deaf, dumb, the blind (Al Quran 2:19) needing revival from death (Al Quran 8:25).

The Crucifixion

The Jews wished to bring about the death of Jesus upon the cross for the purpose of calling him accursed in accordance with the pronounce-

ment in Deut. 21:22 which declares, "he that is hanged is accursed of God." His death on the cross would thus confirm him as a false Messiah. Therefore, it was incumbent upon God to save Jesus from the accursed death to prove the validity of Jesus's claim as reformer sent by God. The Quran contradicts the assertion that Jesus died on the cross: "they slew him not, nor did they bring about his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified...they have no certain knowledge thereof, but pursue only a conjecture (Al Quran 4:158)." Thus God frustrated the plan of the Jews. Although Jesus was nailed to the cross, he did not perish on it. He was removed from the cross in an unconscious state.

The Gospels themselves provide evidence of Jesus's escape from the accursed death on the cross. Jesus foretold that his fate would be similar to that of Jonah (Matt. 12:39,40). In other words, Jesus would be placed in the tomb alive just as Jonah entered the body of the whale alive; he would remain alive in the tomb just as Jonah was alive inside the whale; and Jesus would emerge from the tomb alive just as Jonah came out of the whale alive.

The Gospel narrative of Jesus's earnest prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is very significant. The supplication revealed Jesus's intense fright and agitation of the prospect of suffering an accursed death. Jesus begged God to remove the cup (of death on the cross) away from him (Mark 14:36). Certainly, his prayer was accepted (Luke 22:43). This humble prayer of Jesus to be spread from death dispels the notion that his mission was to atone for the sins of mankind by dying on the cross. Furthermore, the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" uttered by Jesus on the cross when he thought he would perish clearly indicates that earlier God promised he would save him.

The Gospels also record that a Roman soldier pricked the side of Jesus's body with a spear and blood and water immediately came out (John 19:34). The purging out of blood is a sign of functioning heart and a sure testimony that life was not extinct. The fact is, it usually took days to execute a criminal by crucifixion, and for Jesus to die within a few hours, as recorded in the Gospels, is extremely unlikely.

According to Islam, Jesus did not preach salvation through atonement of sins by his death on the cross. The doctrine of Jesus's blood washing away sins is a later innovation. But the true teaching regarding salvation can still be traced in the Gospels. While the doctrine of Atonement considers the Law a curse, Jesus insisted that the path to salvation and eternal life was through keeping the Mosaic Law (Matt. 5:17,19:16,17), with

the essential requirement being repentance (Luke 5:32) and self denial (Matt. 16:24). Each person must carry his/her own cross and account for one's own actions. It is illogical for a person to suffer for the sins of someone else. No vicarious sacrifice is needed for man's salvation as God Himself can forgive the Sins of His repenting servant. The philosophy of someone atoning for the sins of another is emphatically rejected in the Old Testament (Duet. 24:16, Ezekiel 18:2 and 20).

Post Crucifixion

Jesus came under the care of his devoted followers after he was removed from the cross. One of them, a rich man, was Joseph of Arimathea who had prepared a spacious rock-hewn tomb for Jesus. Nicodemus, also a follower of Jesus, brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight, to the tomb (John 19:39). Jesus was placed in the tomb where he recovered from unconsciousness. With the medicinal herbs, Nicodemus prepared an ointment for application to the body of Jesus as an aid in healing the crucifixion wounds. It is interesting to note that the recipe or the ointment administered to Jesus is recorded in ancient Latin and Greek medical texts and in fact, is termed the 'Ointment of Jesus.'

According to the Gospels, Jesus was still in his earthly body of flesh and bones after emerging from the tomb (Luke 24:39) and suffered pangs of hunger (Luke 4:41). On one occasion, Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounded hands (John 20:25-7). Therefore, it was not a glorified supernatural body, but clearly a patient's body bearing the crucifixion wounds.

Analysis of the post-crucifixion period described in the Gospels reveals that Jesus led a low-profile existence. He hurriedly travelled away from the locality of the crucifixion (Matt. 28:10, Mark 16:7). He met only his disciples and trusted followers, and not once did he appear before his persecutors asking them to now accept him as the resurrected Messiah who atoned for their sins. On the otherhand, Jesus even resorted to disguises to avoid being recognized by others (John 20:15, 21:4). One does not expect such fear in person who has conquered death. But one would expect to find a certain level of fear in a person who wished to avoid re-arrest after having escaped from death on the cross. Fear was also expressed by Jesus's followers to the extent that some decided not to tell anyone about his emergence from the tomb (Mark 16:8).

Migration to the East

According to Christian belief, the ascension of Jesus to Heaven followed

his resurrection. But if an ascension really occurred, there is no reason why the Gospels of John and Matthew would fail to mention it. The references to the ascension in Mark and Luke are now considered fabrications; light thrown on ancient manuscripts of the New Testament reveals that the ascension story is later interpolation. The term "Heaven" is used for spiritual bliss which the righteous enjoy after mortal life. Heaven is not a geographical location in the universe where one ascends to.

The fundamental question that arises is, if Jesus did not ascend to heaven, where did he go to continue his prophetic mission for the Israelites? Jesus himself provided the answer when he declared, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24)." Out of the twelve tribes of Israel, only two were in the region where Jesus preached. The other ten tribes, as a result of persecution and migration, domiciled in the eastern countries, especially in Afghanistan and Kashmir. These tribes became known as the Lost Tribes or Lost Sheep of the house of Israel as they became dispersed and never returned to Palestine. As Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews of Judea and the Lost Sheep of Israel, it was imperative for him to migrate eastwards to complete his mission.

The mass of evidence showing the people of Afghanistan, Kashmir and neighbouring regions to be of Israelite ancestry is overwhelming. Their physical features, language, folklore, customs, and festivals attest to their Israeli heritage. Evidence also comes from the names they give to their villages, their monuments, and ancient historical works and inscriptions.

Jesus in India

The presence of Jesus in India is recorded in the ancient Indian literature. An example is Sanskrit book entitled *Bhavishya Mah Purana* composed in the second century A.D. It describes a meeting in Himalayas which took place between Raja Salivahana and a Messiah who was born of a virgin. The Messiah told the Raja that he had come from another country where he suffered at the hands of his enemies. When the Messiah was asked to explain his faith, he replied, "love, truth and purity of heart."

Jesus is also known in some ancient texts as Bodasaf, also pronounced Yuz-Asaf in the Semitic languages. It is an amalgamation of the titles *bodhisattva* and *asaf*. The title *bodhisattva* given to Jesus stems from the fact he was in India at a time of Buddhist supremacy. Large parties of Jews had accepted Buddhism. Therefore, Jesus turned his attention to the followers of Buddhism, who then became convinced of his holiness and

elevated spiritual stature. The title *bodhi* and *bodhisattva* in Buddhism denote highly exalted status. The word *asaf* in Hebrew means "gatherer." As Jesus's mission was to travel in search of the Lost Sheep of Israel, he performed the function of a "shepherd" gathering "sheep." In the Gospel of John, Jesus said: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd (John 10:16)."

It is clear from the literature of Buddhist origin that Yuz Asaf spoke in parables, called his teachings the Gospel and arrived in Kashmir valley from another country to gather his people. He then died and was buried in Kashmir. According to other ancient records of Kashmir, Yuz Asaf came to Kashmir from the Holy Land during the reign of Raja Gopadatta (49-109 A.D) to proclaim his prophethood to the Israelites. Thus he was also known as Yusu (Jesus) of the Children of Israel.

Tomb of Jesus

The Quran says Jesus found shelter on an elevated land of valleys and springs of running water (23:51), an apt description of the Valley of Kashmir. Thus Jesus found acceptance in the Land of the Lost Tribes and lived and preached among them. With the mission completed, Jesus died a natural death at the approximate age of 120. Jesus's tomb, known as the tomb of Prophet Yuz Asaf, still exists in the Khanyar quarter of the city of Srinagar, Kashmir. It has been venerated for centuries. The local inhabitants refer to the tomb as Rauzabal, meaning the Honoured Tomb.

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The Role of Muslim Parents in the Western Society

Yusef A. Lateef

A few days ago, while driving, I came to a stop behind a car at a traffic light. While waiting to move forward, I noticed the bumper sticker on the car in front of me. The sticker said, "The more people I meet, the more I love my dog." This statement caused me to reflect: Of course it is morally correct to be kind to animals. Then I thought possibly it had been placed there as an aspect of humor; possibly it was placed there due to the persons disparagement with mankind. Immediately, I began to sympathize with this thought. My thoughts turned to an article I had read in last year's March issue of Parents Magazine. The article was entitled "Letter From The President." In the article our President, Mr George Bush outlined his child-care policy. His attitude came across as being straight-forward and sincere. He stressed that he had had some interesting jobs in his life but none had been as interesting or demanding or frustrating or rewarding as being a parent. He admitted that as a parent, you are responsible for your children's physical, moral, and emotional well-being. He claimed that in the past child-care programs were often viewed as a special and limited need; however, today over 70 percent of women ages 25 to 44 are working, and that number is expected to reach 80 percent by 1995; therefore, the single most important issue arising from these changes is the affordability and availability of child-care.

In view of this he proposed to create a "children's tax credit" a new refundable tax credit for parents of children under the age of four - regardless of the type of child-care the parents choose. This tax credit first and foremost would help low-income families and would be available to those with very low incomes - immediately.

Mr. Bush concluded his proposal by saying: "I want a better life for my grandchildren. And I want a better life for your children. We must invest in our children... We must provide them the opportunity to make a better life..."

I understand the need for such a program. I realize that as circumstances come about, there are at times wifeless fathers with children who need quality child-care for their children while they go out into the world to express the dignity of labor; and at times there are women without husbands who need the same kind of support.

Yes I'm grateful for Mr. Bush's proposal and I pray that the federal and state governments bring a better and broader range of child care to all working parents who need it, Amen.

Another part of the child-care equation, and I see it as a crucial part of the education process, is preparing our children for their moral responsibilities, as adults. It is logical to assume that if the Western Society were imbued with a deep sense of moral and spiritual values we would not have 200 inmates a week being added to New York jails. The City Correction Department of New York would not have to propose housing prisoners on barges moored on both sides of Manhattan by early summer, and 43 states would not be under court order to correct overcrowding in their prisons.

If the actions of people, parents and children were good both morally and spiritually - housing prisoners would not have become a private enterprise, which has resulted in more than a dozen county jails around the country being owned and operated by companies that receive a daily fee for each prisoner. Four private prisons were expected to open in Texas last summer according to the March issue of the New York Times.

Texas, Florida, Michigan, and Ohio now spend around 400 million dollars a year operating their prisons. California and New York spend about one billion dollars a year. There are about 550,000 men and women in the nation's prisons - 500,000 in state facilities and another 50,000 in federal prisons. One of every 450 Americans is in prison, the highest rate in Western World. We're adding a net total of 35,000 to 40,000 inmates a year - the equivalent of a new prison every four days. Right here in Michigan 19 new prisons are under construction, another seven are on the drawing board.

Now, obviously the prison system has a poor record of rehabilitation. Two out of every three released from prison are repeaters. The question arises what kind of training did they get as children? What did the schools contribute to the moral development of these adults who were once children?

According to Mr. Kevin Ryan, a Social Psychology professor at Boston University, there have been two conditions which contributed to a paralysis in public education on this issue. First: in the early sixties many teachers and administrators believed that values had become a private matter; therefore, in a pluralistic nation with no apparent value consensus the public school teacher was in no position to impose his/her values on children. Secondly, conflicts during the late sixties and seventies over the Vietnam War, racism, and sexual mores made "values" a charged issue. Exactly what happened at this point in our schools is unclear. According to Professor Ryan, it appeared that teachers, who at this time were just as confused about their values and the nations collective values, retreated somewhat. In other words the teacher educators disengaged themselves from the value domain.

The role of the teachers is now defined as a technicians. Their role is to transmit skills and knowledge to students, not values and social attitudes. This may be the first time in history that teachers and schools have confined their instruction just to the head and not to the heart.

Herein lies part of the problem. Educators are not reaching the heart. Although their intentions may be amiable the heart is being neglected. This reminds me of the following lines from one of the poems of the Promised Messiah: "The fault lies entirely with these - themselves, who are blind, otherwise, the light has shown forth like the light - of a thousand suns. In this world the condition is sad, in the extreme of those whose hearts remain blind, even in the presence of this great light..."

Allah says in the Holy Quran - the 7th chapter, the 180th verse: "...They have hearts but they understand not there with,..." and in Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV's Friday sermon of April 20th 1990, he quoted the 7th chapter, the 206th verse of the Holy Quran: "Remember your Lord in your heart with deep humility and in fear of Allah."

Even Hippocrates, (460 -377 B.C) a Greek physician, in one of his lectures to an audience of medical men said: "Some people say that the heart is the organ with which we think and it feels pain and anxiety." It was the common understanding in those days that the soul, or consciousness, was located in the heart. And Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV has said categorically that the heart is the seat of the intellect.

Allah says in the Holy Quran - Chapter 10, verse 58: "O! Mankind there indeed has come to you an Exhortation from your Lord and a healing for whatever disease there is in the hearts, and guidance and mercy to the

believers."

This verse sheds some light on the Holy Prophet's phenomenal success. It tells us that it was due to this excellent book - the Quran, which is designed to give guidance and mercy, in that it is an exhortation from God, and a cure for whatever disease there is in the hearts. The Quranic teaching is calculated deeply to affect and touch the human heart. It lays so much stress on the love and fear of God that even the most crass, the most stonyhearted man cannot remain unaffected by it.

And, that's our role as Muslim Parents: to reflect and demonstrate a deep love and fear of God - a fear that is akin to love - i.e., we must fear doing, saying, or thinking of anything which would displease God.

One can only speculate that insanity, or the absence of the fear of God describes the condition of the person who, according to the New York Times, this past June, placed a 3 year old boy in a pot on a stove with the gas on.

Yes, this is a serious role we have. Allah says in the 11th Chapter - 114th verse of the Holy Quran: "And incline not toward those who do wrong, lest the fire touch you; and you will have no friends other than Allah, nor shall you be helped." One commentary on this verse says: "Man is influenced by his environment, and, if his surroundings are corrupt the corruption thereof is sure to affect him sooner or later; therefore the believers are enjoined to sever all connections with the wicked and unjust.

We know that the Holy Prophet knew this because in the 11th Chapter - 113th verse of the Holy Quran Allah says: "So stand thou upright, as thou hast been commanded, and also those who have turned to Allah with thee..." We see here that the Holy Prophet, in conjunction with moulding his own life in accordance with the Divine Will, had to see that all those who believed in him also followed his example. Therefore, to play a good role as Muslim Parents we should follow his example also. In the 101st Chapter, 7-10 verse of the Holy Quran Allah says: "Then, as for him whose scales are heavy, he will have pleasant life. But as for him whose scales are light, hell will be his resort."

There are at least five places in the Holy Quran where Allah tells us that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) is the Messenger of Allah: (3:145, 5:68, 7:159, 33:41, 73:16). And our role as Muslim Parents is to listen intently to the messenger's message and have our children listen to the messenger's message. Our role as Muslim Parents is to believe in Allah and his mes-

senger, the Prophet, and believe in Allah's words, The Holy Quran, and follow Allah's guidance, as did the Holy Prophet, and exhort all mankind to do the same, for Allah has said that the Holy Prophet is messenger to Mankind from himself. The 21st chapter of the Holy Quran, the 108th verse says: "And we have not sent thee but as a mercy for all people."

The messenger, who was employed by Allah brought a special message - he delivered in essence, moral and spiritual guidance. He made known the best means whereby man may perfect and conduct his moral and spiritual self.

One has only to look at the companions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and the early believers; when they heeded and believed the Holy Prophet and followed him and believed in what he had brought, a great revolution took place in their thoughts, deeds, manners, and social affairs. By reflecting the teachings of Islam as they relate to the childhood training of children, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace and blessings, has said: "Every Child is born true to nature. It is his parents who make of him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.

I highly recommend Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad's book entitled "Way of the Seekers," for it is gleaned from the Holy Quran, the Hadith and the Sunnah. You will find, Insha-Allah, it to be an exposition of the Islamic theory of morals and the way of its translation into daily life, for both the parent and the child.

During the month of April, during Ramadan, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV gave a Khutba on Liqa - "developing a personal relationship with God." After listening to his Khutba, I was, by the grace of God, inspired to write a poem. I'll conclude, Insha- Allah, with the poem. I call it: "The Parents Prayer."

O Allah! We and our children, We search for you
For just a casual relation with you will not do
We try to keep an intimate awareness of Allah's presence
Thousands of prostrations, by Allah's will, we make a new

While Allah alternates the night and the day
We remain believers and continue to pray
Will Allah ever be inclined to hold our hands
If not, still, to Allah belongs all praise, only Allah can show the way

(Continued Page 40)

Life Sketch of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

A. Tariq Sharif

In December of 1896, a man named Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote the following word: "... a person's condition is that he repents time after time and yet falls down and often dispairs and considers his condition beyond remedy. He remains in this situation for a period and when the appointed time comes, a light descends upon him at night or during the day which possesses divine power. With the descent of that light he undergoes a wonderful change and he perceives the control of a hidden hand, and beholds a wonderful world. At that time he realizes that God exists and his eyes are filled with a light which they did not possess before... Other people look forward to paradise in the hereafter, but he enters it in this very life."

Who was this man who told of a path to heaven on earth, a heaven found in the light of a person devoted entirely to God? He was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, the Promised Messiah of our age, the Reformer of Islam, the Mahdi or Guide. We have heard his words full of hope for a seeker after light and truth. But that was just the beginning. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad laid out the practical means for achieving this high end.

The story of his extraordinary life begins in India against the background of his father, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza's estate in India. His father was preoccupied with worldly matters by and large, particularly defending his land against tribal chieftains bent on claiming it. Unfortunately he did not have a great deal of success until February 13, 1835. This date proved a turning point, ending the era of extreme adversity and beginning one of peace and prosperity.

What happened on February 13th? None other than the birth of a son Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. As a baby, Ahmad was shy and withdrawn, inclined towards pondering and quiet amusement. He was not attracted to organized sports but enjoyed horseback riding and swimming. Even as a child, his mind was on a different life, once asking a classmate to pray that he be granted the "grace of prayer." Since he came from a good family, tutoring was arranged for him but he was only given very basic in-

struction in such subjects as Arabic and logic.

From a young age his very being was made of goodness. Ghulam Ahmad was not some shadowy figure with a checkered past who emerged out of nowhere to claim prophethood for himself. From his teenage years his goals were not popularity, fun and wealth, they were to be the best in honesty, cleanliness, virtue and spirituality. He desired high character just as many desire money; Ahmad counted his earnings in good deeds. Nor can we say that this high character and tendency towards piety was due to his family. His father was disappointed that the boy was not interested in his worldly struggles and would have loved to groom him in the family business.

Ahmad's good character was well-rounded also. Being withdrawn did not mean being gloomy or ill-kept. Though plainly dressed, he was very clean, neat and always cheerful regardless of the circumstances.

Despite his limited education, Ghulam Ahmad liked to read particularly of Islam primarily and other religions including Christianity. In fact, of his few early friends were some Christian missionaries and some sincere Muslims.

When Ahmad turned down a lucrative government post in favor of simple diet and time to worship and study, his father came to grips with this heavenly boy who seemed bound on a certain course. Ironically, it was Ahmad's father who confirmed the boy's lifestyle. By his father living his last years in discontent of his lack of land and position, Ahmad saw the desolate end of one who followed the path of the world. As Ahmad would later write: those inmates of Hell described in the Holy Quran are "so much involved with the world as if their feet are secured by chains; and they bend down so much towards worldly pursuits as if there are collars round their necks which do not permit them to lift their eyes towards heaven."

Let us pause here for a moment. By the age of 20 years old, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had already reached such a high status of devotion to God and good character as to hold an example up to all of us. And yet this was only the start of what heights he was to reach spiritually. But we learn a lesson already. As Mirza Ghulam Ahmad tells us in his own writing, we must first accomplish a complete change from basically an animal to a moral individual. Then we can begin to achieve the highest spiritual status. If the Promised Messiah was to achieve higher spiritual status of prophethood, he should have obtained high moral character very early

on in life. We can see that indeed he had. At the same time, being a man of such an extraordinary character at such an early age, we should soon begin to see concrete proof of his piety, and we do.

While in his first job in a city called Sialkot he had several visions which he related to others who then saw them come true. Once while in a room with several others, he had premonition that the roof was about to fall in. After much persuasion, he convinced the occupants to leave the room with him. Just as they left, the roof caved in taking the floor with it.

Another time, Ahmad had a dream that his father had won a case against some tenants. He told his dream to one of the tenants, who after the case was tried, laughingly told Ahmad that the case had been dismissed and his dream had failed to come true. Ghulam Ahmad was much perturbed but soon learned the tenant had lied and his father had indeed won the case.

Already reserved, Ahmad's experience dealing with litigation against tenants for his father made him feel even more unattracted to the society around him. The greed, conceit, lust, and wickedness not only did not tempt him but reinforced his desire to withdrawn into a world of prayer and meditation.

Back in Qadian, his hometown, following his father's death, he mainly studied the Quran and Hadith. But he was becoming more and more known to his fellow residents for two reasons. One was his uncompromising honesty, fairness and righteousness; the other his unfailing defense of Islam at every opportunity.

A man named Muhammad Hassain, a member of the Ahl-Hadith sect of Islam, came to Qadian. As his views were not approved by some people, these dissenters came to the Promised Messiah and persuaded him to debate with Muhammad Hussain. An audience gathered hoping for a good fight. But after Muhammad Hussain's opening speech, Ahmad said had no objection to the views set out. He was not concerned with the humiliation of ridicule from both parties or his own ego. He had only agreed out of his love of truth and honesty.

As to his defense of Islam, the rise of the Arya Samaj Hindu sect in India around one Swami Dayanand quickly tested that. Swami was extremely anti-Muslim and preached against Muhammad and the Quran. Ahmad, whose seclusion was dear to him, could not stand the attacks. So to maintain privacy, he replied to them under various pen names. It was

under his name, though, that he published his first challenge. He would offer 500 Rupees if anyone could produce from their scriptures even one third as much information about the value of truthfulness as he could from the Holy Quran. No one took up the challenge.

It should be mentioned here that the Promised Messiah's knowledge of the Holy Quran even at this stage was remarkable. It is a lesson for all of us, that a true knowledge of Quran can only be gained by reading it! It does no one any good on a shelf. As the reviver of Islam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the first in the study of Quran. He read it thousands of time and could recall, expound on, and co-relate verses quickly and comprehensively.

Another aspect to be noted is Ahmad's view of prayers. He said, "Always continue offering prayers, even if for a time there seems to be no benefit. Like a sick person forced to eat food, the light of prayer will return. Like a person digging a well for water, the answer to your prayer may be just around the corner, so don't give up." Ahmad was constantly praying, even in bed. He often advised "Make it a practice to be in constant prayer and remembrance of God even when you change your sleeping position in the middle of the night."

This kind of devotion, together with a strict fast he began secretly through a vision in which God commanded him to do so, the Promised Messiah began to have experiences we can only marvel at. He wrote of this fast, "I continued this discipline over a period of eight on nine months and despite the extreme meagerness of the nourishment that I took, God Almighty safeguarded me against every kind of disorder. During this period I experienced many spiritual mysteries. I met several previous prophets and some outstanding Muslim saints who had passed away. On one occasion, in a state of complete wakefulness I beheld the Holy Prophet... This was not any kind of dream but was in complete wakefulness. Besides this kind of experience, I beheld columns of spiritual light of different colors, white, green, and red, that were beautiful and impressive beyond description. These columns were so related to my heart, that observing them my heart experienced an ecstasy, the delight of which has no comparison. I imagined that these columns were an illustration of the mutual love between God and man. One light proceeded from the heart and ascended upwards and another light descended from above. Where the two met they assumed the shape of a column."

" These are the spiritual experiences which are not within the scope of worldly people, but there are those in the world who are given knowl-

edge of such matter..." Such was the Promised Messiah.

I have made repeated mention of Ahmad's high character and desire to spend his time in study and pursuit of his relationship with Almighty God. But it was written in the Divine Plan that this man of God was to use his holy personage to accomplish two great and noble tasks: the reformation of Islam and mankind and the exposing of the falsehood of the current teachings of Christianity. His first great work toward both these aims was the writing and publishing of the book *Brahin-a-Ahmadiyya*.

To understand the desperate need of this book, one must consider the religious outlook of the day. Hinduism and Christianity were on the rise, with the resources to spread their blatantly lacking teachings and more importantly, no strong Muslim to defend Islam. In fact, the Muslims were at an all-time weak point in their history, caring little about the progress of the Christian missionaries.

Since Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was sorely in need of funds to publish his book, he was only able to publish the first two of five volumes initially. The year was 1880. But these two volumes effectively refuted many points of Hinduism and Christianity, and set out hundreds of arguments about the truth of Islam. Once again the Promised Messiah relied almost wholly on his beloved Quran, quoting almost 2/3 of the entire book throughout *Brahin-a-Ahmadiyya*. Indeed, here was a man single-handedly giving a new outlook on religion to anyone who read it, solely through his deep faith in the Quran and God Almighty. The Muslims were ecstatic of the publication of the book. Ahmad's friend Muhammad Hussain, who he had refused to wrongly debate with earlier, wrote a 200 page review on the book saying, "This is a book the equal of which has not been published in Islam to this day, whatever might happen hereafter. The author has proved himself so steadfast in the service of Islam through his pen, his money and his tongue, that few such instances are to be found among Muslims."

As the Promised Messiah had devoted himself entirely to God, God showed him special favors as the truly righteous have always experienced. In the case of his marriage, a truly excellent sign was shown to Ahmad. On account of his retired lifestyle and weak health (he suffered diabetes and migraines) the Promised Messiah did not feel he was in a state to marry at all. But God revealed "O Ahmad, live thou and thy wife in paradise!" and "Be greatful for My favor, thou hast found my Khadeeja". Ahmad would later write "No father looks after his son as God did in my case." The marriage was to a young girl of Delhi named Nusrat Jehan. At first

glance, it would seem the bride and groom were not a suitable match. Delhi people had different languages and customs, and held a strong dislike for Punjabis, - Ahmad's people. Second there was a large difference in age. Third Ahmad had little means. In fact, all of the bride's relatives were against the marriage and only the goodly mother-in-law of the Promised Messiah supported him. But to the credit of the girl's parents, they recognized Ahmad's righteousness and the marriage was performed. God's promise was fulfilled in full. Nusrat Jehan Begum came to love Qadian more dearly than her own home and became a kind of "Mother of the faithful" in the same way the young Aisha - wife of the Holy Prophet (p.b.o.h) had become. It was a long happy and fruitful marriage out of which were born ten children. The surviving five were three sons and two daughters.

One of the sons' birth, life and ministry were revealed to the Promised Messiah after a 40-day period of solitude and prayer (like certain prophets had done) in which he asked for a great sign of the truth of Islam. This revelation was of Muslaih Maood - the Promised Son; indeed a phenomenal sign. It was a detailed prophecy filled with exact details of a pure, righteous, intelligent, blessed son whose fame would spread to the ends of the earth. This son was to be born within nine years. On January 12 1889 Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad was born in fulfillment of the prophecy. Anyone who is familiar with his life knows how remarkably this grand prophecy was fulfilled.

Another landmark event also occurred on January 12, 1889. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad announced the conditions of taking an oath of allegiance into a "new" community. Prior to February of 1888, many righteous people had offered the Promised Messiah their Spiritual Allegiance or ba'ait but he did not like the idea as he had no such authority from God. But in 1888, he received a commandment of God to lay the foundation of a new community by accepting ba'ait or allegiances. However he waited almost a year. The reason is that he wanted sincere people to join him and the birth of Muslaih Maood separated the faithful from the superficial. The reason is that many weak in faith claimed that the prophecy of a Promised Son proved false since a son of the Promised Messiah by the name of Bashir was born and quickly died after the prophecy was made. The Promised Messiah never claimed this was the Promised Son, rather he only claimed this by Divine revelation for Bashirudin Mahmood Ahmad. Still many weak-hearted contrived to claim the falsehood of his claim which the Promised Messiah replied to in a small pamphlet. This incident of weak faith of some, proved to be blessing because only the pure of heart entered the community and took ba'ait.

The first ba'aits were taken in an unpretentious building in the town of Ludhiana the first intake being Maulvi Hakim Nurrudin, the closest companion of the Promised Messiah. The Ba'aith is a comprehensive covenant taken with God through the leader of the time and is still taken by Ahmadi Muslims today. I would encourage any non-Ahmadi to examine the conditions of ba'aith. Anyone with an open mind will see a beautiful set of promises one makes which if sincerely lived up to, produce an individual of great value to the society and a deep lover of God and His religion. The very wording of it and what it includes inspires the heart.

It should be remembered that although taking ba'aiths, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in no means claimed he was anything but a reformer of the time. Many holy men had taken pledges of allegiance before. But all of the true men of God who reached the position of prophethood had encountered tremendous opposition and challenges, often risking their life many times in the course of fulfilling their mission. Up to this point, Ahmad had experienced little mass opposition - in fact many Muslims heralded him as a champion of Islam even if they had not taken ba'aith. But soon this was all to change.

With the next several years first orally and then in writing, Ahmad was going to make three major claims. First, that the Messiah and Mahdi being awaited were to be the same person. Secondly, that he was this person. And third, that Jesus Christ was neither alive in heaven nor coming back to earth again; he had died a natural death like all human beings. I would like to briefly explain the importance of each of these claims.

The Muslims had expected a Mahdi or guide foretold to come in the latter days and kill the infidels and convert the world to Islam. Actually this concept was not much different than what the Christians expected Christ to do in the latter days. The only difference was that many Muslims expected this Mahdi to come as well as Jesus Christ to return to the world.

The Christians were not the only people expecting a Messiah - a latter day warrior of the faith - to come to the world and convert it to that particular religion. But Mirza Ghulam Ahmad brilliantly explained the difficulty in many different messiahs coming. Rather, he showed through proofs and arguments revealed by God that the Muslim's Mahdi and the Messiah awaited by every religion was indeed fulfilled in one person - himself.

He further explained that he, like Jesus, was a spiritual warrior and

was not interested in any forceful conversion. Can we imagine more significant and far-reaching claim that any person could have made? Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was claiming to be the Awaited One of All Ages and All People. We must remember with what anxiety and fervor the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Zoroastrians and others were awaiting this Messiah. But at the same time, You have read what kind of man and what kind of life Ahmad had lived up to this point. Does it make sense that this man who desired no publicity or fame or wealth - only to worship his God, would make such a claim for any other reason than God had revealed it to him? There are so many other proofs why Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was indeed the Promised Messiah but time does not allow for them here. I only hope anyone who is not convinced of his truth is now curious enough to examine Mirza Ghulam Ahmad - the Promised Messiah's claims.

The third issue which Ahmad raised was of Jesus's death. Although this issue was linked to his Messiah-ship, its impact was even greater. As mentioned, both Muslims and Christians thought that Jesus had died on the cross at Calvary but then had gone to the skies alive to descend in bodily form in the last days. Again through revelation, the Promised Messiah was given knowledge from the Divine to the effect that Jesus had actually not died on the cross but was saved through the help of two persons and continued on to complete his mission in India and died a natural death. This article will not go into detail how the Promised Messiah proved this. But some of the salient points were the siting of Christ by his apostles after his supposed death, the short time he was on the cross not being enough to kill him, the fact that he had not yet completed his prophetic mission since there were ten tribes of Israel he had not yet visited, and the way God must have answered his heart-wrenching prayers on the cross. But the most amazing discovery of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the actual tomb of Jesus in Sirinager, Kashmir, India.

Naturally all these claims by the Promised Messiah outraged many prominent religious leaders and again strengthened the division of his followers and opponents. This opposition should not be considered lightly by us. In much the same way the Holy Prophet's (p.h.o.h) life was in constant danger, and in fact the way many prophet's - Abraham, Moses, Salih and yes Jesus Christ to name a few - lives have been in danger, the opponents of the Promised Messiah plotted against him. False murder charges, set-ups, plots against life, and ridicule of his teachings, were not above his enemies. But names like Abdullah Athim, Dr. Martin Clark, Pandit Lekh Ram, and Dr. Alexander Dowie, men of immense power, material resources and huge followings have dissolved in history as just passing phases. The name of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is known the world

over and is revered by millions. I would like to mention the Promised Messiah's association with just one of these men, Pandit Lekh Ram as an example of the opponents he faced.

Lekh Ram, a Hindu, was one of the most vocal and bitterest attackers of the Promised Messiah, the Holy Prophet (p.bo.h) and Islam. He refused to debate in an organized or productive manner but chose to persistently degrade and taunt in the worst language. A reviewer (who was not a Muslim) called Lekh Ram's Refutation of Brahini-Ahmadiyya "excelling even the worst of fanatics in abuse, trash, lies and fabrication." In 1886, the Promised Messiah declared he had received a revelation about the future of some of his friends - and opponents. He said he would only disclose the information to those who wanted to know. One of those was Lekh Ram, therefore Ahmad prophesied that according to revelation Lekh Ram would suffer severe torment within six years as a punishment for his disrespect towards the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h) and it would be the type of extraordinary punishment as would leave no room for doubt that it was of a Divine nature. Even at this pronouncement however, the Promised Messiah showed his true nature by stating honestly that he wished no harm to any person, even Lekh Ram, but that it was declared by God.

Lekh Ram laughed off the pronouncement, saying Ahmad himself would die of cholera in three years. But it was not to be. Instead on March 6, 1897 Lekh Ram was mysteriously murdered in his well guarded house. The murderer was never found and thus the Divine plan was commenced.

There is one huge accomplishment in the life of the Promised Messiah which has been touched on only briefly and that is his revival of Islam and the beginning of the Ahmadiyya Community of Muslims. Actually, these two things are nothing more than two phases of one mission. The Promised Messiah in his role as Messiah and prophet revived not only Islam but religion and spirituality as well. As part of this effort, the name of Ahmadiyyat was given in 1900. Ahmadiyyat is nothing more than the true Islam in its pure and pristine form as brought by the Holy Prophet (p.b.o.h) and revived in over time by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Promised Messiah only achieved his purpose through being totally and completely devoted to his love of Allah, the Holy Prophet (p.b.o.h) and Islam.

It is common to end a life sketch of a person with his death. The Promised Messiah, of course, passed away like every other human being; in his case, on May 26, 1908. And of course he was deeply missed by those around him in a way that cannot be described. But I would like to end

this life sketch with one of the most incredible writings we have ever witnessed - the Philosophy of Teachings of Islam.

The book is actually a speech written by the Promised Messiah for an important conference of different religions held in Lahore, Pakistan in 1896. Different representatives of the religions were to prepare papers on five basic themes of religion. The paper of the Promised Messiah was so absorbing and so easily the best one presented, the conference was extended a full day to allow its completion. Along with his other innumerable gifts to us, the Promised Messiah has given us this book as a brilliant blueprint to spiritual life. I would like to close, as I began, with an excerpt from this book:

"The method of establishing perfect spiritual relationship with God that the Holy Quran teaches us is Islam, meaning devoting one's life to the cause of God and being occupied with the supplication which we have been taught in Surah Fatiha. This is the essence of Islam - complete surrender to God and supplications taught in Surah Fatiha are the only methods of meeting God and drinking the water of true salvation... Those alone find God who enter into the spiritual fire of Islam... that burns up our life and consuming our false deities presents the sacrifice of our life and our property and our honor to our Holy God. Entering it we drink the water of a new life... All our passions and our love for anything beside God are totally consumed and our previous life dies. This condition is named Islam in the Holy Quran. Through our complete surrender and the will of God our passions are killed and through supplication we acquire new life." _

(Continued from page 30)

Guide us the the right path, and when the right path has been gained
Have us continue to be humble, simple and plain
The path of perfect humility is both easy and difficult
O Lord, all ego and arrogance we disdain

May we realize that the essence of worship is a feeling of nothingness
To attribute to ourselves no kind of importance is the test
May we be worthy to worship Allah
May we become slaves of Allah, then, Insha-Allah, if the beloved should incline,
we shall be blessed
Amen

CONDITIONS OF "BAI'AT" (INITIATION)

(as announced by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, Mahdi;
the formal initiation into the Ahmadiyya Movement started on 23 March, 1889.)

A person who desires to make the covenant should make a solemn pledge:

First, that till death he shall abstain altogether from associating anything with Allah in his worship;

Second, that he shall keep away altogether from falsehood, adultery, gazing lustfully, cruelty, dishonesty, disorder, rebellion and every kind of evil; and shall not allow himself to be carried away by his passions, however strong they may be;

Thirdly, that he shall perform the five daily acts of worship, according to the Divine command and the directions of the Holy Prophet, and shall try to the best of his ability to offer the late night voluntary prayers to invoke the blessings of Allah upon the Holy Prophet, to ask forgiveness for his own sins and for supplicating Allah for His help; and that reminding himself of Allah's bounties, shall praise Him continuously;

Fourthly, that he shall in no way do harm to any of Allah's creatures in general and to Muslims in particular by giving way to his passions, neither with his hands, nor with his tongue, nor by any other means;

Fifthly, that in every state whether of joy or of sorrow, of prosperity or adversity, he shall prove himself faithful to Allah and shall be ready to endure every kind of insult and pain, and that in the hour of misfortune he shall not turn away from Allah but shall rather draw closer to Him;

Sixthly, that he shall not follow vulgar customs and shall guard against all evil inclinations, and shall submit himself completely to the authority of the Holy Quran and shall make the Word of Allah and the practice of the Holy Prophet the guiding principles of his life;

Seventhly, that he shall discard pride and haughtiness and shall pass his days in humility, lowliness, courtesy, and meekness;

Eighthly, that he shall hold his religion and the dignity and welfare of Islam dearer than his life, wealth and children and everything else;

Ninthly, that he shall for the sake of Allah, have sympathy for Allah's creatures and shall, to the best of his ability, devote his natural talents towards the promotion of their welfare; and

Tenthly, that he shall establish a relationship of brotherhood with me on condition of obeying me in all good things and adhere to it till the day of his death and that this relationship shall be of such high order that the like of it shall not be found in any wordly relationship either of family or between master and servant.

AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM U.S.A.

Headquarters:

2141 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202)232-3737

Tucson	1001 N. 10th Avenue, Tucson,	AZ 85705	(602)884-8964
Phoenix	2521 North Sean Dr., Chandler,	AZ 85224	(602)234-8176
Los Angeles	11941 Ramona Ave., Chino	CA 91710	(714)627-2252
	8640 Manchester Ave., #1 Buena Park,	CA 90620	(714)670-1840
Merced	4422 N. Maple Fresno,	CA 92669	(209)291-9019
Sacramento	5600 Walerga Sacramento,	CA 95842	(916)348-7681
San Francisco	1024 Apgar St., Oakland,	CA 94608	(415)658-9174
San Jose	452 Cheyenne Lane San Jose,	CA 95123	(408)226-5731
Hartford	24Beech St Danbury,	CT 06810	(203)74-85674
Washington	2141 Leroy Place N.W. Washington,	DC 20008	(202)232-3737
Miami	4307 W. 11th Ct., Hialeah Miami,	FL 33012	(305)557-6678
Chicago	2 S. 510 Rt. 53, Glen Ellyn,	IL 60137	(312)790-0804
	4448 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago,	IL 60653	(312)268-8281
Waukegan	2103 Gabriel St., Zion	IL 60099	(312)746-5585
New Orleans	716 Mayfair Lane Kenner,	LA 70062	(504)468-8020
Boston	4 Brookfield Rd., Burlington,	MA 01803	(617)273-1090
St. Paul	504 James Ave., #112 Mankato,	MN 56001	(507)387-7220
St. Louis	4401 Oakwood St., St. Louis,	MO 63121	(314)381-4850
Baltimore	4406 Garrison Blvd., Baltimore,	MD 21215	(301)664-2747
Detroit	P.O.Box 1422 Streling Heights,	MI 48311	(313)264-5540
North Jersey	58 Cypress Neck Rd. Lincroft,	NJ 07738	(201)842-7742
Willingsboro	24 Bridge Street Willingboro,	NJ 08046	(609)877-2833
New York	86-71 Palo Alto Street Hollis,	NY 11423	(718)479-3345
Rochester	14 Woodstone Rise Pittsford,	NY 14534	(716)385-1874
Athens	P.O. Box 338 Athens,	OH 45701	(614)797-4811
Cleveland	297 Center Road Bedford,	OH 44146	(216)439-4448
Columbus	44 Logwood Lane Columbus,	OH 43228	(614)278-9325
Dayton	637 Randolph Street Dayton,	OH 45408	(513)268-5512
Tulsa	2704 East 5th St. #2 Tulsa,	OK 74104	(918)587-5240
Portland	11455 S.W. Muirwood Dr., Portland,	OR 97225	(503)644-5833
Philadelphia	5120 N. 10th St., Philadelphia,	PA 19141	(215)455-4655
Pittsburgh	2522 Webster Av., Pittsburgh,	PA 15219	(412)682-4066
York Harrisburg	334 S. George St., York,	PA 17404	(717)843-3162
Amarillo	5018 W. 16th St. Amarillo,	TX 79106	(806)353-1566
Dallas	3313 Sandy Trail Ln., Plano	TX 79106	(214)964-0755
Houston	7122 Sonore Baytown,	TX 77521	(713)383-2093
Seattle	13011 Meridian St. #K111 Puyallup,	WA 98378	(206)845-6078
Milwaukee	4010 A.N. Oakland Shorewood,	WI 53211	(414)962-6839